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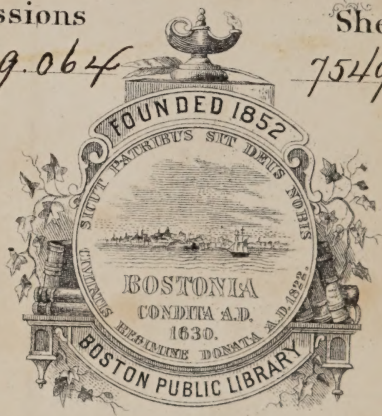

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Wm. J. Whipple Esq.
Cambridge
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Wm. 27, 849

SECOND

PASTORAL LETTER

TO THE DEAR PEOPLE OF MY CHARGE.

Beloved, this second letter do I write, sending it with friendly and Christian greetings; hoping hereby to quicken your memory of the past; and to strengthen your faith, your trust, and your resolutions in regard to the future.

Truly we may say, hitherto the Lord hath been mindful of us, and helped us. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for his creating goodness; for his providential care; for his bountiful kindness; for the hopes and promises which he gave to the fathers by the prophets; for the law which came by Moses; and for the grace and truth which came by the Son of his love.

Great have been my labors, cares and anxieties, since my lot was cast among you; but they have not been without support, mercy and joy. How thankful should I be to God, that amidst all the temptations and trials to which you have been exposed, you still remain firm and unwavering, as I trust.

I need not remind you that attempts have been made, the past year, to shake your faith, to draw

you away, and to ruin this society. A very bitter and grievous thing it is to recall those things which have been done in many of our towns the past year.

Many of you, no doubt, have often been urged to forsake this house of your fathers' and go to another place of worship. No doubt, the influence of my instruction has been much limited and weakened by those who have studied to produce a contrary impression. If they have been actuated by bad motives in this thing, may the Lord dispose them to exercise due and seasonable repentance; if they have done it through ignorance and error, may the light of the pure and peaceful gospel shine more clearly and certainly into their minds, and the beams of the Son of righteousness warm and heal their hearts.

I rejoice that notwithstanding all the efforts to diminish and scatter you, we are still so numerous, and so united. I say not these things from any pecuniary considerations; I assure you it will be my temporal interest to leave you, whenever you shall find it to be either your temporal or spiritual interest. But I say them, because I verily think that you have here greater advantages for growing in the graces and virtues of the humble Christian. I desire to live that I may do good, and I desire to live *here* that I may be instrumental in your salvation. My prayer is, that nothing from within or without may break our union, and that whenever we are called to separate, we may do it in peace and love.

I have had many reasons to bless God that I wrote my former letter to you. I thought of the plan of speaking in this way to you, on the

evening previous to my ordination, when I received more particular intelligence that the 'Orthodox' in various parts of our country were secretly distributing their tracts in Unitarian families. My giving you a summary view of my religious faith and opinions, and openly telling you of the light in which I considered some of the doctrines and dealings of the 'Orthodox,' and placing these in your own hands, I thought, would be discharging the duty of a faithful watchman, and, I hoped, would excuse me from the unpleasant task and the trouble, of treating of these things in the desk, or even of filling up the hours of my ministerial intercourse with you in hearing and correcting these things.

That letter, designed for such purposes in regard to you, I am happy in saying, met the approbation of my fathers and brethren in the ministry, and has been instrumental in conveying our sentiments more plainly to many others. Perhaps it excited more attention, because it had been so commonly reported that Unitarians have no creed. Those who believe or circulate such reports had the pleasure or pain of knowing, that one Unitarian certainly had a creed, and a creed not very deficient in length. But then we differ in this respect from many of other denominations. We do not lord it over the faith of others. We do not require that all should submit to our opinions and authority, nor tell them that unless they do so they cannot be Christians, nor be saved. You will recollect that after I had frankly given you my creed, I then gave you directions how you should form *your own*, and that I pointed you to the Scriptures, that you might

read and make them the guide and rule of your faith and practice. I say it again, the year has been full of labors, cares and anxieties; and they have been greatly increased by those measures which our adversaries have adopted to overthrow our faith. But I have had my sources of joy and satisfaction. The people are daily becoming more acquainted with our views; the more sober and judicious are embracing them; ('of honorable men and women not a few'); and our faith is becoming more and more the faith of the multitude. It is admirably suited to the wants and condition of the poor, as it sets the character of their God and Savior in so affecting a light, and opens to them such a fountain of comfort and happiness. May the Lord hasten the time when the gospel shall be preached in its purity, simplicity and power to all the children of want and the sons and daughters of sorrow!

I devote a part of this letter to a retrospection of the year that is just gone.

During the three months I preached here as a candidate, owing to your peculiar circumstances, many of my sermons were especially devoted to stating, explaining and defending the truth of the gospel; and your attention was frequently directed to doctrinal and controversial subjects. This was done not through love and pride of debate, but from a sense of duty to the Head of the church and to you. But since my ordination and the distribution of my Pastoral Letter and many other tracts, I have somewhat changed my course; seldom introducing those topics, which had engaged so much attention; and as your ability to distinguish between truth and

error has increased, I have labored more earnestly that your hearts and lives might be conformed to the truth.

I shall here set down my texts and the subjects of my discourses during the past year. I do it for several reasons: 1st, to refresh the memories of those who were present. 2d, to inform those who were absent. 3d, to benefit both the charitable and the uncharitable of other denominations, who may have the curiosity to read this letter.

I have exchanged nearly a fourth part of the time; what instructions you received on those days I know not, as I do not dictate to those with whom I seek this ministerial intercourse. The sabbath on which I gave my answer, I told you plainly what doctrines I should teach, and how I should teach, and in what ways I intended to seek your edification and growth in grace and knowledge. Since my ordination, my texts and subjects have been as follow.

Eph. vi. 18, 19, 20; The reasons why a minister should desire the prayers of his society, and why they should pray for him. Philip. ii. 1, 2 and iv. 1.; Motives and exhortations to unity among yourselves and steadfastness in faith and love. Rom. xiv. 17.; What is not, and what is religion. Luke ii. 11.; Proofs of our views of Christ drawn from the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the various witnesses and teachings contained in the New Testament. Heb. xiii. 14.; Reflections on the close of the year. Luke x. 61.; What kind of resolutions we often make. What should be the character and influence of our resolutions. Why they are often weak and fruitless. Ps. cxix. 19.;

Reasons for our searching and prizing the Scriptures, drawn from our situation in this world. Luke xi. 1.; Observations on the several parts and petitions of the Lord's prayer. The spirit of this prayer. All denominations of Christians can use it, and can say Amen to it. It is not so with many prayers taught by others. James iii. 17.; The lovely character of heavenly wisdom, or the nature and proper fruits of true religion. Matt. xx. 1.; The uses and abuses of this Parable. 2 Cor. v. 17.; What is meant by being in Christ. The propriety of calling the real Christian a new creature. How he is new. The manner and means of becoming new creatures. The importance of the subject. 1 Sam. xvi. 7.; The duty of searching and keeping the heart. How the doctrine of the text should warn and comfort us. 1 John v. 3.; The nature, evidences and effects of love to God. God our rightful and best lawgiver. This law just what we want for the health of our bodies and souls. A contrast between those who obey his law, and those who do not. One of each character in adversity and in the hour of approaching death held up to view. Acts xxiv. 25.; Excuses for putting off the duties and exercises of religion to a distant day. The guilt and danger of it. The reasonableness and importance of an immediate attention to it. Luke x. 41, 42.; The character of Martha and Mary. Their different expressions of regard for Christ. A minister's visits to his people often burdensome to them, and painful to him. They pay more attention to his appetites than to his character and office, and to their own spiritual wants. False notions about happiness. Christ

and his truth the one thing needful. Other things incapable of making us happy. Religion a good and durable part, good at all times and in all circumstances. The supreme importance of choosing this good part; and the inexcusableness of neglecting it. Acts xvii. 30; On the nature and proper fruits of true repentance. Jer. xxii. 21; Prosperity as well as adversity should lead us to repentance, holiness and virtue. James v. 13.; The afflicted and mourning invited to attend to religion, and to communion with God by prayer as their only source of support and consolation. Col. iii. 17; The meaning of the text. The reasonableness, importance and pleasure of an entire devotedness of heart and life to a course of Christian piety. 2 Cor. iv. 18; On acquiring and preserving a spiritual and heavenly mind. Acts viii. 36; The character of the eunuch before and after his conversion. His confession of faith, short and plain. On the subjects and modes of baptism. Willing to baptise by immersion. What hinders your being baptised, and becoming professors of religion and members of this church? The proper influences of religion on those who possess it; it sends them on their way homeward and heavenward rejoicing. Gen. xlii. 21; The folly, wickedness, and consequences of cruelty. The slavery of a guilty conscience. John xx. 11, 12, 13; Mary's early visit to the garden. Her complaint. The resurrection. Three classes of questions relative to Christ. His nature, offices, and moral character. The two last the most important, and the most clearly revealed. What renders Jesus Christ dear to us. 1 Thess. v. 16; The reasons

of religious joy. They err who think religion makes us gloomy and unsocial. Sam. iii. 40; The design of fasts. The patriotism and piety of observing fasts, appointed by our government. The duties of the text explained and urged. Eph. v. 16; A comparison of the moral and religious state of the world in former periods with that of the present day. The pride, ambition, intolerance, bigotry, slander, suspicion, reviling and delusion, prevalent in the country. Philip, ii. 12, 13; Concern and anxiety about our salvation, proper. What is implied in working out our salvation. Man's natural and moral ability, dependence and freedom. The two verses should be taken together. The precept of the one is as positive and binding as the doctrine of the other. God's working in us is a motive not to our idleness, but activity. How this passage of Scripture is abused. Luke xix. 7; Zaccheus. The prejudices against him and his occupation. His character and conversion. The various hindrances to repentance, and to the regaining of one's reputation. Ps. cxix. 165; What is meant by loving God's law, and in what ways it secures to us peace. Luke xxii. 19; The occasion of the words of the text. Why we should remember Christ. This institution suited to keep him alive in our memory. Matt. vi. 10; Thy will be done. Reasons for this prayer. The importance and the happiness of being conformed to the divine will. Job xxi. 15; Reasons for serving God drawn from his character and our relation to him. The beneficial tendency and effect of prayer. Eph. ii. 8; The grace of God. How it is conveyed to us. The mediatorial office of Christ.

The objects, grounds, and fruits of faith. A saving faith. What. In what sense this grace and faith is the gift of God. Gal. v. 22, 23; On the fruit of the Spirit. Divine influence. The character of one born of the Spirit. Titus iii. 8; Good works. The reasons why they have been spoken against. Some passages of Paul's epistles misunderstood. Saved by grace. The real value of good works; signs and evidences of grace and faith. 2 Tim. iii. 15; The education and character of Timothy. What sort of persons first and most readily embraced Christ. The importance of early religious instruction. Why Sunday Schools have become necessary. How and what children should be taught. Ps. xix. 14; Dissuasives from all indecent and wicked words, and all impure and sinful thoughts and desires. John xiii. 7; On the purposes of our trials. We know they may be subservient to our good. A dark Providence is often soon explained. How. Various trials are rendered beneficial. It is one of our duties to trust our heavenly Father. Luke ix. 26; Reasons for not being ashamed of Christ and of his word. The consequence of such a shame. Motives to confess Christ openly and to follow him. 3 John 4; What is meant by the expression, walking in truth. Why a Christian should rejoice in the religious progress and welfare of others. The character of this joy. 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16; What these hard things are. The blindness of those who pretend to a clear insight into all scripture. Though some things are hard to be understood, all are not so. Enough is plain for our piety and virtue here, and our happiness hereafter. How Peter speaks of Paul

and of his writings. 'Our beloved brother Paul.' Matt. xx. 20—29; Worshipping Christ. The meaning of the word in various places. Ambition. Remarks on the expression, Ye know not what ye ask; and to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give. In what ways we should strive to excell others. The purposes of Christ's mission. The relation Christians bear to one another. Matt. vi. 6; Secret prayer. The meaning of the passage. Does not forbid social and public worship. The peculiar advantages of secret prayer, and the inexcusableness of neglecting it. Luke ix. 55; On the spirit of Christ, and the peculiar features of the gospel. Matt. x. 38; Taking the cross, misunderstood by many; what it means. Religion requires nothing but what is reasonable and practicable. Nothing should prevent our following Christ. 2 Sam. xii. 1—7; Nathan's Parable. The occasion of it. Reflections. How we should admonish others. Self-ignorance. A good and bad conscience. How sermons are often heard. How David was a man after God's own heart. Ps. xxxiv. 11; Doctrines and duties for children. Their temptations and sins pointed out. Ps. cxxxix. 18; The omnipresence of God. The various uses of the doctrine. Mark xiv. 8, 9; The deed, the influence, and fame of Mary. What others can and should do. John vii. 46; In what ways Christ excelled all others. 1 John iii. 7; Various kinds of deception pointed out. The error, or deception alluded to in the text. Evangelical righteousness plainly set forth and urged. 2 Kings iv. 26; The reasons for thinking it is well with little children that leave this

world. 1 Thess. iv. 11 ; These four days meetings. Titus ii. 6 ; Gospel Temperance. John xxi. 22 ; Religious curiosity. [These three last sermons are published.] Matt. xi. 28 ; The text and context, explained. The gentle invitation of Christ to all who labor and are heavy laden. What is implied in coming to Christ. Motives to do so. An exhortation to obedience. Mark xv. 39 ; On the death of Christ. What the Centurion saw to make him believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Instructions from the subject. Matt. xi. 29 ; Motives to learn of Christ, drawn from his character and instructions. Christ and his doctrine compared with other teachers and theirs. Ps lxxxvi. 7 ; Encouragements to call upon God in the time of trouble. 1 John iii. 3 ; On the worth and purifying nature of a gospel and well-grounded hope. Isai. lxiv. 6 ; We all do fade as a leaf. Instruction drawn from the revolving seasons ; especially from the changing and decaying scenes of autumn. 1 Thess. ii. 7, 11 ; Various modes of discipline and instruction. The course pursued by Christ and his Apostles. How religion should be taught in families, in the house of God, and to persons of various characters. John xiv. 6 ; Our need of Christ. Who are walking in the true and living way, and who are not. 'The one right way,' and who is in it. 1 Cor. xv. 11 ; The meaning of many expressions used frequently by other Christians, and seldom by me. Why I do not. Some not Scriptural ; and some very liable to be misunderstood. Concern. Anxiety. Obtaining hope under conviction, brought out, &c. Acts xxv. 28 ; The various degrees of attention

paid to religion by different persons. A tender expostulation with an earnest exhortation to you to become altogether Christians. Rom. xii. 2. Be not conformed to this world. What is implied in this and similar expressions, and what is not. Christians should be useful. Christ in the world, but not conformed to it; conversed even with sinners, but sinned not. We should imitate him. Matt. v. 8; Purity of heart. On seeing God. In what ways this is verified. The importance and blessedness of inward purity. How it is to be obtained and preserved. Ps. ciii. 2; Character of the Psalms. The duties of blessing and remembering God, urged. John i. 6, 7; The character and office of John the Baptist. Christ's testimony concerning him, and his testimony concerning Christ. Esther vi. 1; The King's vigil. The important things connected with it. On happiness; Povidence; Solitude; Conscience.

Here follow the subjects of several Lectures. On abiding in Christ. Growth in Grace, and in Christian knowledge. Love to Christ. What we must do to be saved. Regeneration. Evidences of our having been with Jesus. The Christian's light must shine, not for his own glory, but for the glory of God. Abraham burying Sarah.

I hope this long account of my discourses will furnish subjects for profitable reflection to you all.

Brethren, you have my thanks for the attention and candor with which you have listened to my instructions. May they exert a holy influence on you. If any of you have not been so constant at public worship, and so faithful to your spiritual welfare, as you might; I entreat you to

consider your ways, and to neglect religion no longer. My thoughts are often turned to those who, I fear, think but little of their own souls. O that they would be wise. Most gladly would I assist them in making the hopes and promises of the gospel their own.

I beseech all the members of this society that they would earnestly, constantly, and honestly strive with me for the furtherance of the gospel; that they would labor with me as they have means and opportunities, in spreading a knowledge of true religion. O let us not be ashamed of Christ and of his word. Every one can do much for the cause of divine truth. There is a great variety of excellent and cheap tracts published by the American Unitarian Association. I shall keep on hand a large number of them, and shall be glad to sell them to you at the wholesale price for circulation. In this way you may do much for the cause of truth and holiness at a small expense. But employ no unhallowed means to promote the cause of Christ. I exhort each one of you to read such a portion of the Bible daily and weekly, that you may read it through in the course of the year. It is painful to think how many scarcely do this in their whole life. Imagine how sad and dishonorable the reflection at the closing scene, that you had never read the Bible through a single time.

I entreat every one to begin and end each day with a lively remembrance of his dependence on, and accountability to God; and not only to offer the morning and evening sacrifice, but also to form the habit of lifting up his soul to God in mental and secret prayer often.

May those who are parents set a pious and virtuous example before their children; and may those who are children be obedient; and remember their Creator and their Savior in the days of their youth.

May we all be diligent and faithful in our several callings and stations, showing justice and benevolence to men, and an obedient love to the Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ. I earnestly exhort those who have relatives and friends belonging to other denominations to guard against the temptations, and to be always prepared for the trials of their situation. O take your cross! Take your cross, and remember that Christ endured untold privations and sufferings that you might be nourished with the bread of life. Be not afraid nor ashamed to own and maintain the doctrines of the gospel. Be fully persuaded; be decided; and instead of listening incautious, to those who would subvert your faith, flee to the word of God, to secret and silent meditation, and to a throne of grace, that your strength may not fail, nor your light become darkness, and your minds clouded by prejudice and error. But O, be careful to walk wisely, and honestly, and harmlessly before those who dissent from us. In asserting and defending your own rights, trespass not on theirs. In all your conduct and feelings towards, and in all your intercourse with them, exhibit the temper, the spirit, and observe the precepts of your Savior. Study to avoid all those sins of the times which so sadly prevail. Endeavor chiefly to defend the cause of truth by temperance, righteousness and godliness, and by letting the worth of your religion be seen in its

holy and virtuous influences on your character. Be much in secret prayer to God for those that differ from us, that they may be patient and pacific, and have the humility, the meekness and the charity of Jesus Christ, in whom was found no fault and no guile, and whose 'soul was gentle as a lamb' O God, hasten the good and glorious time when thy children shall show such love and compassion towards one another as thou and thy dear Son do towards them!

May the blessing of the Almighty rest on those kind and charitable souls of other denominations, by whatever name they are called, who have often and in various ways refreshed my drooping spirit and gladdened my heart. Should these lines ever reach you, know that they come with sweet remembrances, with Christian sympathies, and with salutations of peace and love. Often have we surrounded the same altar, and offered the sacrifice of praise and prayer. O pray for me still, as I do for you, that we may so abide in Christ on earth, that we may dwell with him in heaven. O when shall that golden period arrive, so charmingly described by Cowper; when

> 'In the heart
> No passion touches a discordant string,
> But all is harmony and love.'

Before I close my letter, I would again call up the attention of all the members of my society to the duty of prayer and family worship. If you feel diffident and unqualified, use *forms* of prayer. If you are afraid, subdue that fear by remembering that John the baptist, and Jesus taught their disciples to pray; and that such men as

Fenelon, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Matthew Hale, and Sir William Jones, were accustomed to read their prayers; and that a large proportion of the Christian world use forms of devotion at this very day. Brook's, Dabney's, Sewall's; either of them would answer your purpose. There are other works of this kind. But their erroneous doctrines render them unsuitable. I would advise those of you, who can without any inconvenience, to purchase a small volume, 'On the Formation of the Christian Character,' by Henry Ware, Jr. It is cheap; and it may afford you much assistance in the divine life.

May those who have been called to afflictions of any kind the past year have their trials sanctified to them for their good. May the rich be liberal; and the prosperous, grateful; and the poor, content; and the sick, patient. May the wounded heart be healed, and may the anxious and inquiring find the way of peace and rest to their souls. May we all repent of our sins, grow in grace, and constantly be preparing for a righteous and peaceful death!

Brethren, may peace, and truth, and love be and abide with you. I desire still to share a place in your respect, confidence and esteem, and to be remembered in your prayers. That you may so fill up your days on earth that your names may be written, and your souls have their joyful abode in Heaven, is the prayer of your friend and pastor,

JONATHAN FARR.

Gardner, Jan. 1832.

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